

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Eastern small-footed bats

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

During the winter of 2006-2007, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission biologists examining a mine in Haywood County found 109 eastern small-footed bats, the largest known hibernation colony of this species in the southeast. A return to the mine in the winter of 2007-2008 turned up just 56 bats, though it's quite possible the bats shifted to an inaccessible part of the mine.

The Eastern small-footed bat is found from eastern Oklahoma to western North Carolina and up into Canada and is one of the smallest bats in the United States. Its also one of the most cold tolerant – frequently one of the last bat species to enter caves and mines for the winter, and often hibernating near the entrance of those caves and mines, where temperatures are coldest and get below freezing - a significant feat for an animal that can weigh as little as a penny.

Although fairly wide-ranging, the eastern small-footed bat is not common anywhere and is designated a species of special concern by the state of North Carolina. As white nose syndrome, a deadly bat affliction of unknown origin, gets more and more attention as it spreads up and down the Eastern United States, this discovery highlights why it's so important that its spread be checked.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.